(d) whether there is any re-thinking on either side about going ahead with the above-mentioned project and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The Government of India and the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran have set up an Indo-Iran Joint Committee to examine all the options to import natural gas to India from Iran through pipeline including on-land and off-shore deep water pipeline outside the continental shelf/margin of Pakistan. The consortium led by M/s. Snamprogetti-Saipem of Italy has been awarded to conduct feasibility study for deep water pipeline. The Joint Committee is in the process of undertaking feasibility study for onland gas pipeline.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

(d) The techno-feasibility and economic viability of the gas pipelines depends on the outcome of the studies.

Selection of Gas Distributors by DSB-4, Bihar

†1524. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the names, addresses of the first, second and third position in the panel of gas distributors selected in different places by Dealer Selection Board Zone-4 in Bihar, place-wise;

(b) the names of the places from where the complaints have been received out of them; and (c) the details and outcome of the enquiry being conducted by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) The names of candidates included in the panel for appointment of LPG distributors at various locations are published at the place of interview just after the completion of interview process by concerned Dealer Selection Board (DSB). DSB, Patna-IV, Bihar has conducted the interview for the locations, namely, Rarhi, Kishanganj (V), Murliganj (V), Narpatganj, Sonbarsha, Triveniganj, Birpur, Jhanijharpur, Ghoghardiha and Laheriasarai in Bihar State.

(b) and (c) Complaints received against the selection made by the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

DSBs are investigated by the Oil Marketing Companies and appropriate action is taken as per the guidelines laid down by the Government.

Outstanding dues of oil companies

1625. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that outstanding dues of oil companies from oil pool account are soaring;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what steps are being taken to clear the dues; and

(d) what steps are being taken to cut down the operational cost of oil companies in view of global recession?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The estimated oil pool deficit as on 31-3-2000 and 31-3-2001 was around Rs. 6,256 crore and Rs. 12,600 crore respectively.

(c) The management of the oil pool account is a continuous process and the strategy to manage the same depends *inter alia* on various factors *viz.* the prevalent international prices of crude oil/ petroleum products, exchange rate, duty structure, domestic selling prices of controlled products (motor spirit, high speed diesel, kerosene for public distribution and domestic LPG) etc. The oil pool deficit is monitored by the Government and appropriate action is taken from time to time.

(d) Various steps taken by oil companies to reduce operational cost include rationalization of manpower, upgradation of technology, energy conservation, reduction in input cost, improvement in productivity etc.

Reduction of subsidy on Petroleum Products

1626. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the volume of subsidy for the current financial year on kerosene oil, public distribution system and domestic LPG going by the current trends;

(b) whether Government are contemplating the reduction of subsidy on these items; and